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Olga Kawecka, *Buried in His Heart*

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This novel is inspired by true events. A cheerful youth left his house one sunny afternoon and never returned home. He was missing for forty years. His remains were found in the courtyard of his former classmate...

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Author's Note

This book is inspired by true events. A cheerful sixteen-year-old youth left his house one sunny afternoon and never returned home. He was missing for forty years. His remains were found by accident in the courtyard of his former classmate...

The plot of the novel *is not a reconstruction* of events, but only my hypothesis.

Olga Kawecka
September 29, 2025

I

"Were you friends?"
"No, we weren't."
"Did you have anything in common?"
"No, we didn't."
"Do you remember him?"
"No, I don't."
I should like not to remember him, but he is always present in my thoughts and feelings – in my very self. I carry his grave in my heart.

II

Diego's smile was charming. I remember him talking lively to his comrades in the corridor of the college when I passed by. He suddenly cast a glance at me – thoughtlessly, incidentally. A fleeting glance with a cheerful smile, which struck my very core... He did not notice anything and continued speaking. I walked past him without expressing anything. That ordinary day of an ordinary lad at an ordinary college soon ended, but it lasted in my soul – like his incidental happy smile at my very self.

Diego was affable and cheerful. I considered

him to be very successful in all – in his favourite football, in making friends, in winning round people... He was loved; I was not. I was a shadow amongst the living. He was the most living one.

The only thing that Diego could not manage was studying. He had an aptitude for learning, he was intelligent, but he disliked studying. His true passion was football. He played it skillfully in a youth team. His coaches believed that he had a great future in sports. He believed in himself. He was aware of his merits; however, he was modest. I never heard him boasting about his achievements, nor did I notice him envying others. He was the most lovable person that I ever met.

Diego was... I am... Only a thin blade divides the present from the past.

III

I was lonely. I had no close friends – only acquaintances. At school I was never bullied – I was merely ignored like an insignificance, something transient and incidental. Like a thing. A table, a chair, a window, I – there was no difference. People looked past me – through me – without noticing my presence. Why?

I studied well – very well – and I was praised by my parents and teachers. I had a good appearance. I did my best in basketball, karate, and

swimming. I always did my best, but I was nothing.

I was nothing, for I was lonely. My success meant nothing, for there was no one who could indeed appreciate it. My appearance was nothing, for there was no one to admire it. My soul was nothing, for there was no one to understand it.

I could not comprehend why I was always alone. What was the difference between me and him? Why was he noticed, but I remained a shadow?

However, I did not envy him. Our personalities were dissimilar, and I never wanted to be in his place. But then I should like to be in his place now. To feel nothing; to see nothing; to hear nothing... To be nothing in nothing.

IV

I was unable to fall asleep after that ordinary day. I lay alone in my half-empty spacious room with an uncurtained window and looked at the clear black sky with the bright full moon. I heard cars pass occasionally past my house; I heard distant voices; I heard the outer world, which I was excluded from. I did not belong to anything. I had a good family, but I felt misunderstood by my relatives. I had acquaintances, but I was ignored. I had life, but I did not own it.

Does one indeed own one's life?

I lay still and thought, gazing into the infinite void of the sky. Is there Heaven? Future life? Eternal existence of the soul? What are we – a deathless soul trapped in a mortal body, or only this doomed body – a future corpse?...

I was sixteen years old at that time. I did not understand many things. I do not understand many things now, at the age of fifty-six. Perhaps, no one understands life completely but only has ideas, concepts and moral limits, which one is forbidden to transgress. Beyond those limits there is hell.

I pondered over the Universe, life, death, and Diego. I still saw his enchanting smile – I still sensed its warmth in my soul. This warmth comforted me for some reason.

The next day I saw him at college again. He did not notice me. We sat in the same lecture-room; we met each other in the corridor; we were together yet separated. Separated by our lives, thoughts, feelings, bodies... Is any possibility to overcome these barriers? Can anyone understand another person completely? However, it seemed to me that I understood him. He talked, smiled, and looked happy, he was surrounded by friends; but had he true friends? I was alone aside; he was alone amongst others. Both of us were alone in the Universe.

V

Something had changed. My life seemed to be the same: I went to college, I returned home, I did housework, I strolled in the streets, I listened to music, but a new undertone lasted through all. An undertone of hope, warm and joyful like his smile...

I thought about Diego almost constantly. I enjoyed hours of solitude, when, alone in the seclusion of my remote room, I was left to myself and my delightful reflections. He was not with me, but he was present everywhere. I felt his warm, comforting presence in my life like a friendly embrace. I no longer felt lonely: this slow torture of my entire conscious life had ended.

VI

Diego was warm and comforting. And he was also very beautiful. Too beautiful. Insupportably. There was something tormenting in his beauty. I wanted to own it, to touch it, to keep it with me – within me – forever...

His transient yet eternal beauty... Transient on earth, eternal in Heaven... I could not believe that the perfection of lines and colours, which formed his gentle self, was destined to perish as all in this world. His beauty negated destruction, it negated

death. He could die, but his beauty would exist eternally – somewhere...

Where? In Christian eternity? In the infinite black Universe with dispersed cold stars? In my soul?

What was my soul? What were my thoughts and feelings? Were they to disappear with me at the moment of my death, or were they imperishable? I did not know this, nor do I know this now. I know only that I lost my transient earthly happiness due to my own fault...

Diego's beauty fascinated me. I loved to recreate it in my imagination at night. I recalled his lithe body, brown hair, which fell carelessly over the left side of his high forehead, big dark eyes framed with long black eyelashes, thin eyebrows, straight small nose, full red lips, smooth skin tinged with the sultry summer... I relished his precious cosy image; I mentally explored it in detail; I enshrined it within my soul.

I enjoyed imagining him beside me. What could we do if he were with me? We could listen to my favourite music. We could talk about his football. We could simply see each other and feel eternal... I was thirsty, imagining him.

VII

Diego did not notice anything. At college we

never spoke to each other: we were strangers in the boring space of a boring college. Nothing more. Nothing more in reality, but in my imagination he became closer to me every day. He became a part of me – he became my own self in another form.

I always thought about him. I always felt thirsty, thinking about him. It was unbearable.

What was I to do? What was I to do with this distanced closeness, which I was lost in?

One day at college I pulled myself together and wrote on a piece of paper: "If you want, I can help you with your homework." I did not know whether Diego would agree to my proposal, but I was unable to invent anything else.

I waited until we were alone in the lecture-room after lessons. With my heart racing, I silently gave the note to Diego and went away without looking at him. I dreaded my actions and uncertainty.

At home I was anxious. I refused dinner and locked myself in my room. What awaited me?

VIII

The next day I met Diego in the corridor. He glanced at me friendly and said nonchalantly: "Hello!" in his beautiful melodious voice. Formerly, he had never greeted me. I rejoiced and mur-

mured shyly: “Hi.”

I could not concentrate on lessons. Thank God, there were no examinations that day, for I should certainly have failed.

After lessons, when I was putting my books back in my bag, Diego stealthily slipped a note into my hand as he walked past carelessly. A wave of mixed joy and dread swept over me. I feared what he had written in his note. I feared that he noticed my emotions. I feared that others saw us. However, I maintained an outward calm, put the note in my bag and then unhurriedly left the lecture-room.

I did not meet Diego outside, and this calmed me. I should be unable to see him, with the unknown in my bag. What had he written to me?

There was no one at home when I returned. I rushed to my room to read the note.

The piece of paper was neatly folded. My hands were trembling when I was unfolding it. What awaited me?

“Thanks. I agree.” Nothing else.

So, Diego had accepted my offer. He became one step nearer to me.

IX

I understood that the world was unable to

comprehend my admiration for Diego; therefore, I concealed it – I enshrined it in my soul – in my silence. I decided not to communicate with him at college: no one ought to know anything about us. I did not want to share my feelings with the outer world, for I was sure that it would ruin their harmony.

The next day, in the lecture-room, I gingerly gave him the note: “Come to me today at 3 o’clock. I shall be alone at home, and we shall be able to practice math.” Below was my address.

Diego came. I met him near the gate. He was confident and light-hearted as ever and smiled much, as though he were very happy. I scarcely believed what was happening, spell-bound by his presence. His presence seemed divine to me.

He certainly noticed my strange attitude towards him, but this did not surpise him for some reason. He behaved, as though all were as it must be.

He ascended the stairs and entered my room after me. My half-empty room with a plain furniture was illumined by the joyous sunshine. Or by his presence? Never had I seen my room so cosy.

I asked Diego to sit down in a chair near the desk, whereas I settled on the edge of the made bed. He gazed at me. I remember that lively expression of his beautiful eyes. His shiny hair fell over the left side of his clear high forehead, and a slight gentle smile played on his lips.

I felt shy, but I was the host, so I offered him

a cup of tea. “Thank you, I should love to have a cup of tea,” he replied easily. He was always confident, even in my room.

Thereafter we drank tea with biscuits. I put the second chair to the desk, and we sat there, opposite each other, illuminated by the warm sunlight. I enjoyed watching Diego: he looked so nice while nibbling on biscuits carefully. He certainly liked them.

After tea, I tried to teach him mathematics. In this subject he was not confident at all. He did not understand almost anything and laughed endearingly at his mistakes. I could not understand why he did not understand anything, and I laughed with him. It was impossible to teach and to learn, and we simply amused ourselves.

My timidity passed, as though Diego’s enchanting confidence were conveyed to me. I was no longer shy to look at him or to talk to him. Only at times, when my elbow suddenly touched his, a kind of electricity ran through my veins. This was new and strange.

Diego was not in the least embarrassed. He enjoyed being in my room; he enjoyed my awkward funny attempts to teach him; he enjoyed my awkward funny company; he seemed to enjoy my very self... He was the first person in my life who was happy to be with me.

Diego was with me for two hours, thereafter he had to go home. I saw him to the gate. He waved to me, smiling affably, and then walked

resolutely away. I remember his slender figure in a light-blue T-shirt and blue jeans disappearing in the sunshine at the end of a quiet street.

X

At college we did not talk. I did not ask Diego about this: he himself understood the necessity of hiding the mystery of our budding friendship. I feared that it might be destroyed – might be cut like a flower – with a rude remark, a suspicion, or incomprehension... He seemed to think the same. From the beginning, he behaved like I, as though he felt my very core and knew what to do. He understood me without words.

My only dream was to have a friend who would be able to understand me without words. I always had to explain something to others, to prove something, to do my best in trying to overcome an invisible barrier between me and others. Who had built that barrier? They? Or I? Were they unable to comprehend me, or was I incomprehensible? Sometimes I thought that I should never be able to get out of my inbearable husk of loneliness. My loneliness seemed to be inherent – a part of me, like skin. I could not be alone, but I had to be alone, for some unfathomable reason. Diego was the only person who could understand me.

XI

Our second meeting was in my room, too, but without mathematics. We simply enjoyed being together. I enjoyed this, for I was lonely. Why did he like my company? He had so many friends... Why I?...

I noticed that he gazed at me sometimes, as though he were trying to remember those moments forever. His gaze was thoughtful and somewhat sad. Why? What did he think of me? What did he feel?

We conversed about insignificant things like any other lads. We discussed sports, studies, or modern music... But we never talked about girls. This topic was uninteresting. We did not even ponder over why we differed in this from others. All was natural. Our being together, enshrined in our secrecy and the silence of my room, was natural.

XII

At the third meeting we sat outside. I wanted to go out with Diego from the courtyard to the street, but I feared that someone might see us. In the courtyard we were safe. My parents were at work; a high fence protected us from the neighbours; the weather was good... All was good when

Diego was with me.

He strolled round the empty courtyard for a while, relishing the pleasant warmth of the sun, whereupon he sat down on a bench near the fence. “I feel so comfortable here,” he uttered in hushed tones, gazing at the clear cobalt-blue sky. “Here I feel peace.”

I settled shyly beside him.

“Come to me every day after lessons,” I whispered without looking at him. “I am happy to see you here.”

Diego turned to me and, meeting my gaze, smiled affably. “I agree,” he said softly and then gingerly put his delicate firm hand on my shoulder for a second. I glanced at him. His face was lit up by the soft light and some gentle inner shine. He carelessly rested his hand on his knees and sat still, looking at the ground. The silence was not awkward: I enjoyed even silence beside him. Silence protected us. It was the beginning of our friendship and it would be its end. Its end?... I could not even think of it. Our friendship would never end, I should not be alone again. Alone – in my half-empty room, in this hostile world, in the infinite cold black Universe... No! All of a sudden, I turned to Diego and impetuously put my arms round his fragile body, burying my face in his shoulder. I should never let him go! Never!

Diego seemed not to be surprised by my actions. I felt his affectionate arms embrace me protectingly and his fluffy head touch mine. We sat

thus for a while, spell-bound by each other's closeness and warmth. I had never embraced another person of my own age. This was new and intoxicating. I felt, as though I were dispersing sweetly in his warm comforting being. I sensed his body through his T-shirt, and this made me feel real, as though my touch to him transfigured me into a living person. I ceased to be a shadow.

I gingerly raised my head and glanced at him. His expression was dreamy and very content. He met my gaze, and I smiled in response. He moved closer and confidently pressed his mouth to mine. Unbearable rapture took possesion of my whole being. It seemed to me that I was falling somewhere – into some enravishing depth. Diego cuddled me tighter, and I sensed his heart racing. It was beating near my breast. The heart of another person was beating near my breast... At last, I was alive.

Diego moved away with a touched smile. "You kiss so awkwardly," he whispered lovingly, stroking my hair with one hand, while holding mine with the other.

"I have never kissed anyone," I murmured bashfully, looking away.

"We shall fix this," Diego replied playfully in hushed tones and rose, still holding my hand:

"Come on!"

I was as though disoriented:

"Where?" I asked huskily, gazing at his flushed beautiful face.

“To your room.”

I did not understand anything: all was blurred – blurred with the sunny happiness of his delightful being.

Diego led me to my room. He carefully locked the door and stopped near the bed, looking at me expectantly. I did not know what to do.

“Now I am your teacher,” he joked softly and came up to me. I stood motionless in the middle of my own room, which seemed strange and unrecognisable.

“Do not be shy, all is well,” Diego whispered soothingly as he put his calming arms round my shoulders. The whole world vanished when Diego was beside me.

... I remember his gentleness – the gentleness of a fragile flower in my protecting embrace. He was submissive, defenceless and completely mine. I caressed his beautiful slender body; I explored it with my lips and hands; I touched him like a sacred thing... The world disappeared, time stopped, the cold Universe did not exist: there were only we, in the safe silence of our Love.

“Perhaps, such bliss is in Heaven,” I uttered, cuddling Diego on my bed after our caresses.

“My heaven is in your arms,” Diego responded poetically and then kissed me on the lips.

XIII

We met in my room every day after lessons. Neither my parents nor his knew anything. At college we did not even look at each other. To the outer world, we did not exist.

"Let's elope!" Diego once suggested enthusiastically, lying beside me on my bed and looking at me charmingly. I laughed gently at his endearing naivety: "Where can we elope?"

"Where no one will ever search for us," he answered thoughtfully, running his fingers slowly through my hair. "Where we can always be together."

"This is impossible." I caught his hand and pressed his palm to my lips. Diego chuckled nicely: "It tickles!"

"Close your eyes," I told him softly and sat up.

"What for?" he became interested.

"You will know..."

Diego obeyed. He was lying before me – nude, warm, perfect in every line. I sat on my heels, with my hands on my knees, and began to contemplate him like the most sublime thing in the world.

"Well?" Diego glanced at me.

"You are divine," I murmured. He smiled contentedly.

"So are you," he said lovingly. "You resemble a marble statue of a Greek god. You are my own immortal god. The god of absolute happiness."

No one had ever praised me. No one had ever loved me. I gazed at Diego like at God's miracle.

"If only I could say how much I love you!" I uttered excitedly. Thereafter I asked him again: "Please, close your eyes and lie still." Diego obeyed willingly, and I leant over him. I kissed his responsive lips, flushed satin cheeks, tender neck, and fragile breast; I explored every inch of his dreamlike body with my worshipping lips, while he sighed happily at times, receiving my kisses. They were my prayers of gratitude to him and to God.

XIV

No one noticed anything. My house kept our secret. Silence kept our love.

Weekends, when my parents stayed at home, were dolorous. I counted the hours until our meeting; I imagined Diego beside me; I talked to him mentally. He was always present.

Then he came again. I always met him near the gate and walked with him to my room. Locking the door, I embraced him tightly, as though we had been separated for centuries. Thereafter we caressed each other on my bed; we conversed; we drank tea; we ate sweets and fruits; we listened to music; we were simply together.

"This is real life," Diego once said, luxuriating

in my embrace when we lay on the bed, nude and satisfied.

"I do not want anything else but to be with you ever," I replied. "I cannot even imagine to be alone again."

"You will never be alone again," Diego promised readily and sat up, gazing gravely at me. "I should rather die than leave you."

"This is too much," I responded in surprise. "We shall certainly be separated forever, then."

"No, we shall not." His voice was calm and serious. "Death is not the end. The body dies, but something must continue living – emotions, thoughts – what is called 'soul.' It cannot die."

"Why are you so sure of this?" I was astonished at his strange words. He lay back, snuggled up to me and whispered, looking at me: "I have understood all this thanks to you. When I am with you, I feel immortal. And you seem immortal, too. Will death be able to destroy this happiness, this friendship, this kinship?"

Diego was young and romantic. He believed in beautiful things. He was a beautuful thing. He *was*...

XV

"Never talk to me about death, agreed?" I asked Diego one day when we sat in my room,

embracing each other and listening to music.

"Why?" he glanced inquiringly at me.

"I fear it," I admitted. I had always dreaded death – not my own death, but the very concept of it – the concept of total destruction and absolute meaninglessness.

"Everyone fears it," said Diego calmly. "Death is the unknown, and unknown things are fearful." He thought for a while, listening attentively to the nostalgic tune of the song. "You know," he suddenly turned to me; "I should like to explore death. I want to see what it is."

"Shut up," I replied to his philosophical ideas.

"You have misunderstood me." Diego paused to cogitate. "I do not want to kill myself or to be killed – I want to glimpse what is beyond the final line. To sidle there, to glance, and then to return."

"You are funny," I laughed, patting him on the shoulder, and added gravely: "No one can return from there."

"I know this," responded Diego softly. "I only fear to be separated from you there," he explained and snuggled up to me, as though in search of a shelter.

XVI

"I always wanted to have a friend who would be able to understand me completely," told Diego.

“Sometimes I saw him in my night dreams. It was very difficult to awake after such dreams... I tried to find him, but he seemed to be nowhere to be found. Lost in nowhere... I missed him, as though I knew him. I loved him, as though he and I were already friends. No one understood my need for him. And then you appeared. I liked you at first sight. But I feared to take the first step – I feared to fail. Now that you are with me – you are mine – I know that I shall never part from you voluntarily. Maybe, our physical attraction will pass, but the essence of our friendship will certainly remain unchanged. You and I are inseparable.” Diego looked pensively at me.

“You will never lose me,” I promised seriously, taking his hand in mine. “I shall be unable to leave you.”

Diego lay down on my bed, deep in thought. After a pause, he said, turning to me: “I never loved so strongly. This is absolute happiness. I shall be unable to live without it. Every moment with you is eternal, whereas the outer world seems so futile... I want to be with you, to sense your warmth, to listen to your voice, to touch you, and to feel real. I want to feel your feelings and to make you feel mine. Especially...” Diego smiled coyly. “Especially when you give me so much pleasure. I should like to make you feel it, too. It is ineffable – it is supreme delight,” he uttered ardently and pulled me towards him to make him feel that delight again.

XVII

"This is similar to death," Diego uttered when we rested after our caresses. "I felt, as though my body dispersed into a myriad of blazing suns – for one moment – one moment of utmost bliss."

"Death is the complete opposite of this," I responded softly. "Death is darkness, decay, mere soil. Nothing else."

"We live on a planet made of the dead, then," Diego said with a grim irony. "What was life created for? For death?"

"Why do my caresses make you philosophise?" I joked, cuddling him. I did not want to ponder over the meaning of life now.

"Our very friendship makes me think of such things," Diego whispered in my embrace. "It is too perfect to end; it is too perfect to last."

XVIII

Diego's body dispersed into a myriad of blazing suns... I myself dispersed in his unbearable beauty into a myriad of suns – I dispersed in order to revive stronger and better. Our love-making was the antithesis of death – it was an affirmation of life, the apogee of life, its utmost manifestation. We were immortal, making love with each other. Or was all this only our imagina-

tion? What was reality, then? Reality was the silence that protected our love. The silence, which was to last longer than our love. The silence – the essence of all...

We often sat in silence. Words became superfluous. Their curtain covered our selves, hindering us from listening to each other. We preferred to converse by means of silence. It was perfect – to sit, embracing each other, or to lie on the bed, feeling the other's comforting warm body and soothing heartbeat. The world disappeared, and there existed only we – two loving inseparable ones in the immense cold blackness of the Universe.

"Imagine, over us there is nothing," Diego said, gazing pensively at the ceiling.

"Why 'nothing'? There is this ceiling, the roof, clouds..." I did not understand his thought.

"I mean there exists nothing beyond clouds. Only the great Nothing. Can you imagine it?" Diego turned to me.

"I do not even try to imagine it. It is not pleasant."

"But I often tried. That infinite nothing, which covered me..." Diego's voice was thoughtful and calm. "I attempted to imagine millions of miles of space above me, which covered me like waters of a great ocean, and I felt like an insignificant particle lost at its bottom – a particle of nothing, with an ability to feel. A feeling particle in the great Nothing..."

“Please, stop this,” I asked him.

“What if I lose you tomorrow?” Diego glanced at me anxiously.

“Nonsense!” I replied firmly.

“I fear to be separated from you.” He snuggled up to me, hiding his face on my breast. I knew these feelings – I had known them fully in my loneliness. Those millions of miles of the black Nothing was my own loneliness. I understood all this, but I did not want to think of this now. Now I was too happy.

“I shall always be with you,” I whispered soothingly to Diego, stroking his fluffy hair. “I shall protect you from any black nothing. I shall make you feel that supreme delight. I shall support you if you need. I shall listen to you. I shall give you a biscuit. Do you want a biscuit?”

Diego laughed merrily at my unexpected proposal: “Rather!”

And we drank tea with tasty biscuits.

XIX

“You give me so much power that it seems to me I can do all,” Diego said admiringly when we lay relaxedly on my bed. “Yesterday our team won again. It were you who inspired me to play and win.” He kissed me on the lips gratefully. Thereafter he moved away and contemplated me, as

though I were an object of worship – a divine source of his spiritual and bodily strength. “You are my miraculous battery,” he joked. I smiled:

“And you are mine. Sometimes it seems to me that I can do everything, I am tireless, I can fly, I can overturn mountains, I can be the best student in the whole college... Then you come to me and charge yourself from my power. And the only thing that I can do after that is to lie beside you.” I playfully patted him on the shoulder. He was happy and very content – satisfied as he was always after our caresses. Indeed, our intimacy seemed to charge him with some extraordinary powers.

His main power was to attract me. I did not imagine myself without him. He was omnipresent – he was in my thoughts, in my feelings, in my present, my past, and my future. He was my thoughts and my feelings, he was my self in another body. And that body was sublime...

“I could gaze at you for hours,” I whispered, looking at the delicate line of his nude body when he was resting on his side, facing me. I lightly touched his shoulder and slowly stroked his side: “You are unimaginably beautiful,” I whispered in awe. My hand lingered on his hip. “You are perfect.” I beheld his dreamlike body, spell-bound by his ineffable beauty. He smiled happily, luxuriating under my slight touches to his body.

“I feel so alive when you touch me,” Diego uttered in hushed tones. “Please, continue!”

My hand slipped lower, and we began cares-

sing each other once more. Passion swept over us like a sea wave, we could not resist it even if we had to. Blissful moments always came quickly and powerfully, lingering in our love-worn bodies like a shining warmth, which faded slowly away, into an unknown dark distance...

"I adore you," I whispered to Diego, cuddling him. He was completely mine.

XX

Diego was a tender beautiful flower. Who could care for him as I could? Who was able to understand him as I was? Who was able to make him happy?... The possibility of separation appalled me. I feared for him. I feared that his perfection of a flower might be broken by negligence. I feared that someone would destroy him. I wanted to protect him all my life... But it was I who broke that perfection.

XXI

"Why did you smile at him?" I asked harshly, staring at Diego. He stood calmly near the window in my room, with his arms folded, – a dark slender figure against the sunlit white frame. A

fragile porcelaine figurine, which was only to be cared for...

"I did not smile at him," explained Diego impassively. "I simply greeted him, because he plays in our team."

"You smiled! – smiled, as you did at me for the first time..." Anger choked me as I paced the room. "You certainly feel something for him."

"He is only my comrade, nothing more." Diego's clear voice was even.

"You like him. Am I right?" I stopped before Diego, gazing into his eyes. He shook his head regretfully: "You are absolutely wrong. I love only you."

"Today you love me, but tomorrow you will love someone else," I shouted, losing my temper. I felt completely powerless in the face of an unknown threat to my happiness – to our happiness. I did not want to return to the gloom of my loneliness, nor did I want to let Diego return to his. I did not want to let him go into another embrace like into the great Nothing.

"I love you," Diego repeated softly and emphatically. "Never have I loved anyone as strongly as I love you."

"Your love began with such a smile." I was adamant. "Do you remember?... You smiled charmingly at me, too."

"Perhaps, my face looks thus when I smile." His tone became somewhat helpless. He came up to a mirror, which hung near the door, and looked

at his reflection. I loomed behind him.

"You see," Diego tried to smile, gazing in the mirror; "I simply look nice when I smile. This is only an impression, nothing else."

"Stop grimacing," I told abruptly. Diego turned to me. His eyes expressed concern.

"I fear to lose you," I admitted huskily, taking a step towards Diego. I stopped at arm's length from him. Diego gave me a sorrowful glance.

"So do I," he whispered, lowering his gaze and remaining motionless. "I do not want to lose you."

"But this does not prevent you from smiling at other boys," I resumed attacking him. My causeless fear gripped me like pincers, and there was no escape from it.

"Please, stop this. I do not want to argue with you," Diego begged me softly, raising his head to look at me. His tender flower-like face was pale.

"I cannot stop this," I replied sincerely, averting my gaze. "This fear haunts me. It is omnipresent. I think almost constantly that you will leave me one day, and no one will ever be able to replace you. And..." I paused, choosing words. "I fear that someone will destroy you – your personality, your self... This world is hostile, Diego. It is very difficult to meet a true friend; and even if you succeed in finding him, he can turn into your enemy – into your worst enemy..."

"I shall never leave you." Diego moved closer to me and impetuously put his affectionate arms round my shoulders. I instinctively embraced

him. I felt, as though both of us were standing on the edge of a precipice.

"Let's make love once more," Diego whispered in my ear. "Once more..." he repeated in a strange sad voice.

I moved away from him a little, and he looked at me. Tears glistened in his eyes. I had made him cry... I hated myself for this. I took him in my arms and carried him to the bed.

... He lay there, under me, and his angelic face expressed heavenly bliss...

He lay there, with sweet moans of pleasure...

He lay there, completely mine, inseparable from me...

We were one soul.

XXII

Diego got up reluctantly, carefully put on his pants, jeans, and shirt, adjusted the belt, glanced at his wristwatch and then looked at me: "It is time to go." What if?...

What if this meeting was the last? What if this perfection of beauty would belong to another person? What if the harmony of our love would be destroyed? What if both of us should be destroyed?...

"Why are you so sad?" Diego asked me concer-

nedly when I got out of our cosy bed.

"Please, never leave me," I murmured without looking at him and then began to dress.

"Do not worry, I am with you," said Diego reassuringly. "I shall come tomorrow."

I did not want to let him go even for a few hours. I did not want to stay alone in my room. I wanted to be with him ever... A sudden pang of my former loneliness stabbed my whole being, and I fell face down on the bed. Diego rushed to me: "What happened to you?"

He stroked my shoulders, hair, and back. I lay still, clenched with a foreboding of loneliness into one helpless ball of pain.

"I shall never, never abandon you," he uttered swiftly, caressing me, kissing me, trying to calm me. To no avail: I felt, as though I were to die. There. Alone. Immediately.

I sat up abrubtly. Diego stood on his knees beside the bed and gazed at me concernedly.

"I shall kill myself, if you forsake me," I muttered to the side. My gaze fell upon a small knife on my desk, which I used to sharpen pencils. I did not understand what I did and why... I jumped to the desk and grabbed the knife.

"I shall kill myself, if you leave me!" I shouted and then pointed the blade at my heart. What for?...

The reaction of Diego – who was a goalkeeper – was lightning fast. I had no time even to notice what happened. He dashed to me and clasped

my hand to force me to drop the knife. I resisted violently. He pulled my hand with the knife away from my breast. I lost my balance, and... All that I remember is his gaze – surprised, strangely still, directed into nowhere... His warm body lay motionless under me on the floor. The small thin blade was sufficiently long to pierce his fragile chest – where his heart was.

XXIII

He lay before me on the floor like a broken flower. Helpless. Defenceless. Destroyed. The body, which had delighted me, no longer existed – there was only a sinister trace of its annihilated beauty. His blood was blossoming on his breast into a dread flower of Death.

I had no time to think. I dragged his body away – out of my still room, down the wooden stairs, across the cold floor, out of the house... To the courtyard: there was no other place to hide it. "It" – Diego had changed into "it."

It seemed too heavy. I had never felt its heaviness when I had lifted him to carry him to the bed, or when he had been over me there... He had been so light and agile... Now his body was fearfully-heavy. The heaviness of death.

I managed to drag the body to the far end of the sunlit courtyard. I heard distant voices and

the noise of cars from outside – from the outer world which I no longer belonged to. Both of us no longer belonged to...

The soil was heavy, too. I struggled with it, as though I were fighting against the heaviness of mortality. Every movement was a struggle. The soil, roots, stones – all made me struggle – and struggle hastily. My heart was racing – time was racing – the Earth was racing to the end of times...

A pit sufficed to place him. I hurriedly laid him there, struck for a moment with a terrible reminiscence of putting him lovingly on my bed.

He lay on his side in the dark hole – pale, blood-stained, with his eyes closed. Lumps of soil fell upon his hair. The evening sunbeams illuminated him. I thoughtlessly adjusted his arms before his breast. His arms which had embraced me...

His wristwatch still showed the correct time. "I have to hasten, my parents will return soon..."

Lumps of soil were falling heavily upon his indifferent little body when I was burying him. I did not feel anything, nor did I think about anything save the need to do my work swiftly.

The face was the last thing to cover. For a split second, I hesitated before putting soil upon it. His beautiful face, which seemed calm like in sleep...

The last lump. The last fragment of my shattered existence. The last sunray in the courtyard. Nothing.

XXIV

Diego's blue jacket still hung near the entrance, left there when he had hastened after me to my room.

I came up to the jacket to take it off and stretched out my hand – my hand, on which soil and his blood were mixed. My hand, which had caressed him an hour earlier...

Without touching the jacket, I fell to my knees in the paralysing emptiness. His jacket still hung here. He lay in the ground. The past and the present mingled into one surreal picture distorted with utmost pain.

A few minutes later, I staggered to my feet and trudged to clean the floor in the house.

Afterwards, I washed myself, returned to the jacket, took it, and went to my horrible room where, holding his jacket, I collapsed on my rumpled bed.

XXV

The most painful thing was awakening the next morning. I slept only a couple of hours at dawn, without dreams, in the complete blackness of my consciousness. When I awakened, reality struck me like a knife. The day before all had been

blurred; now I realised what had happened. I had neither remorse nor fear, but only an annihilating feeling of a void within me, as though my very core had been torn away and there remained only my aching envelope. I found myself beyond the limits of my own life – in that hell which I had pondered over. Its name was loneliness.

I could not talk about Diego with anyone. I could not speak of my feelings. I could not tell about his death even if I wanted to. There remained silence – the silence of his death – his silence. His grave was in my heart.

XXVI

Afterwards, I often saw Diego in my night dreams. He was always alive. We conversed, listened to music, made love... In dreams I continued to live. In real life I was dead.

It was I who had been buried – I, with my desires, thoughts and emotions... My self lay in the grave, whereas on earth there existed my shadow. Again, I became a shadow – a shadow lost in the great Nothing.

XXVII

I planted a tree near his grave. It was his new earthly embodiment. I liked caring for it; I liked watching it grow. For some reason, all this gave me hope... I missed Diego. After his death, I loved him still more.

When no one was at home, I could sit beside his grave for hours. I talked to him, I told about events of my life, I shared my joy and sorrow with him... I grew older, he remained sixteen-year-old.

I never loved another youth. I was unable to love anyone as much as I loved Diego.

He lay in my courtyard for years, facing my house. He was an invisible witness of my life. He was present there, in the gloom of his inexistence, when I celebrated my birthdays, my wedding day, the birthdays of my child, Christmas, New Year's Day... He was always present in my life. He had not died – he had changed into a part of my self. He was nowhere and everywhere, everywhere and nowhere. He had dispersed in my life, I had dispersed in his inexistence: we had became inseparable forever.

XXVIII

"They have found bones in our courtyard." My sister's voice sounded terrified on the phone. I

froze, unable to speak.

"They have found human bones in our courtyard!" she repeated almost in despair. I took a grip on myself. "Do not worry," I replied in an even voice; "I shall come soon."

The sun flooded the street; the autumn chill was in the air; bare trees stood still in the quiet space. I was walking resolutely towards my house, trying to remain calm. I knew that I should not be imprisoned for his death, for there was no punishment for murders committed more than fifteen years ago. I was sure that they would be unable to find any evidence or to identify the body. I was sure that I was innocent, for I had not slain him: his death had been an accident. I was sure that I should be able to endure the investigation. I had been enshrining my secret for forty years; I had turned into his coffin; what could be stronger than I?

He could be stronger than I – that beautiful sunlike youth, who had changed into poor bones in the courtyard where he had kissed me for the first time... Should I be able to withstand him – to withstand my feelings for him, which I had been keeping within me for years? Should I be able to withstand the torture of remembering?

XXIX

The torture of remembering was exacerbated by hordes of journalists who besieged my house. In a matter of hours, I turned into a celebrity. An infamous celebrity. My face and name were everywhere. I saw myself on the Internet and on TV; I heard my name on the radio; I was everywhere. And Diego was everywhere, too.

My poor friend became a topic of an endless detailed discussion. This was the most painful part of the whole story.

His name meant love. His name meant happiness. His name belonged to him and me. I had whispered it as I had caressed him; I had said it while talking mentally to him near his grave; I had uttered it in my night dreams in a futile endeavour to call him back to life... His name was sacred. Its fame was a profanation.

His grave was sacred, too. They had unearthed my grief, my extreme loneliness, my own death... They had unearthed my former self – that frightened, numb youth who I had been on that fateful day. They had unearthed that horrendous day.

I ought to withstand all this. I ought to endure the dread of his death once more.

XXX

"Were you friends?" a reporter asked me when I sat calmly in the living room of my house.

"No, we weren't."

"Did you have anything in common?"

"No, we didn't."

"Do you remember him?"

"No, I don't."

I was calm. My voice was calm. All seemed calm. The calmness of death.

XXXI

I had to answer vexatious questions of reporters; I had to show them his burial place; I had to undergo interrogation... My wife did not suspect anything. Her faith in me was unwavering. This made the moral torture still more doleful.

I was sinking slowly. I did not recognise myself in the mirror. My wife thought that it was caused by pressure from the police and the media.

I had to be silent again. All had ended; there remained silence – the silence of death.

XXXII

Diego became my life in the true sense of the word. He was in my thoughts when he was alive; he was in my thoughts for forty years. He was nowhere and everywhere. He was – he is.

To me, Diego is not dead. He continues to live – in the silence of our Love.

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About the author

Olga Kawecka (b. 1987) is a historian, translator, poet, and prose writer. She speaks sixteen languages (English, German, Spanish, Italian, French, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian, Portuguese, Galician, Catalan, Latin, Aramaic, Pashto, classical Nahuatl, and Russian). She has authored twenty books, namely seven collections of poems, a biography of Thomas Edward Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), an essay on the Dyatlov Pass incident, a photo book about the old Catholic cemetery in Grodno (Belarus), a collection of treatises on the life and works of the Swedish composer Joseph Martin Kraus (1756-1792) and the German poet Johann Friedrich Hahn (1753-1779), etc.

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